

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DJIBOU 00761 231350Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----002960 231351Z /53

O 230955Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 498

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORIY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

QMEMBASSY PARIS 186

AMEMBASSY SANA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHERAN PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NY PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

S E C R E T DJIBOUTI 761

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS-1

TAGS: PINR, OPS, ET, UR, YS, DJ, US

SUBJECT:SOVIET AIRLIFT TO ETHIOPIA

REF: (A) STATE 297314 (B) STATE 297322 (C) DJIBOUTI 713 (NOTAL)

1. MATTER OF UN AUTHORIZED SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS DJIBOUTI NOT YET
PUBLIC OR OFFICIAL ISSUE HERE. HOWEVER, CHARGE HAS DISCUSSED
PROBLEM WITH PRESIDENT GOULED, DJIBOUTI CHIEF OF STAFF COL. ALI
MEHIDEL, FRENCH AMBASSADOR BASTOUIL AND GENERAL PERIER

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(PROTECT ALL). UNFORTUNATELY, ALL CONCERNED FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO
DISASSOCIATE THE OVERFLIGHT PROBLEM FROM THE COMPLICATED BACK
DROP OF INTERNAL/EXTERNAL PROBLEMS WITH ETHIOPIA, WHO IS
GENERALLY HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MATERIAL AND MORAL
SUPPORT TO THREE SERIOUS TERRORIST ATTACKS ON DJIBOUTI
TERRITORY IN LAST SEVERAL WEEKS WHICH HAVE COST NINE LIVES AND
MORE THAN 30 WOUNDED. BECAUSE DJIBOUTI GOVERNMENT MUST FIND

SOME ACCOMMODATION WITH EPMG, ITS FREEDOM OF ACTION ON OVER-FLIGHT ISSUE IS NECESSARILY LIMITED.

2. STATE REFTELS RECEIVED HERE ONLY TUESDAY AND CONVERSATIONS WITH PRESIDENT HELD SAME DAY AND OTHERS ON FOLLOWING DAY. THE PRESIDENT WAS QUITE AGITATED ABOUT WHAT HE CONSIDERS AGGRESSIVE POLICY ETHIOPIA. HE WAS AWARE OVERFLIGHTS. I DID NOT LEARN UNTIL NEXT DAY THAT FOR SOME REASON FRENCH HAD NEVER APRISED HIM OF THEM. (WE ASSUME THAT SOMALIS WERE HIS INFORMANTS.) HE WOULD LIKE TO INTERDICT OVERFLIGHTS. AFTER REVIEWING OPTIONS WITH HIM, PRESIDENT DECIDED GOOD FIRST STEP WOULD BE CO CALL IN PDRY CHARGE AND LODGE FORMAL PROTEST. HE SPUTTERED THAT HE COULD TAKE WHOLE ISSUE PROBLEMS WITH ETHIOPIA TO OAU OR UN SECURITY COUNCIL. BEFORE SUPPORTING ANY SPECIFIC INITIAL CHARGE STATED THAT HE WOULD PREFER AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS SO THAT DJIBOUTI MOVES COULD BE COORDINATED WITH THOSE OF OTHER CONCERNED COUNTRIES.

3. THE NEXT MORNING, GOULED RAISED MATTER WITH SOMEWHAT SURPRISED FRENCH AMBASSADOR. FROM MY SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH BASTOUIL, I LEARNED THAT FRENCH WILLING SUPPORT ANY LOCAL MOVE ON OVERFLIGHTS SO LONG AS DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS BETWEEN AFARS AND ISSAS NOT BROUGHT BEFORE ANY INTERNATIONAL FORUM. MORE ON THESE MATTERS SEPTEL.

4. FACTS OF OVERFLIGHT SITUATION FOLLOW: ABOUT THREE SOVIET
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CARGO FLIGHTS PER DAY MAKE ROUND TRIP BETWEEN ADEN AND ADDIS OVER DJIBOUTI TERRITORY, AT ALTITUDES OVER 16 THOUSAND FEET. TAIL NUMBERS, SCHEDULES, CONVERSATIONS ARE MONITORED BY FRENCH NAVAL INTELLIGENCE UNITS OPERATION IN GULF OF ADEN AREA. ALLEGEDLY FULL BULK THIS MATERIAL PASSED ON TO U.S. NAVY. INTERDICTION OF FLIGHTS OVER DJIBOUTI WOULD MAKE NUISANCE VALUE. BECAUSE OF LACK FUEL IN ADDIS, SOVIET PLANES REQUIRED CARRY ENOUGH FUEL FOR ROUND TRIP. NEED TO FLY AROUND DJIBOUTI REPUBLIC WOULD REQUIRE EXTRA FUEL LOAD, THEREFORE LESS PAYLOAD POSSIBLE. ANY EFFORT INTERDICT FLIGHTS WOULD REQUIRE FRENCH AIR FORCE BACKUP, SOMETHING WHICH HAS AT LEAST BEEN UNDER STUDY.

5. GIVEN OUR BUILT-IN COMMO HANDICAP, IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO KNOW PRESENT STATE OF PLAY. DEPT REQUESTED EXAMINE ABOVE OPTIONS AND PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS.
CLARK

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NNN

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